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ILLINOIS. CONGRESS OF MOTHERS
AND PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

SPRINGFIELD. ILL.

1919



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ILLINOIS

Congress of Mothers

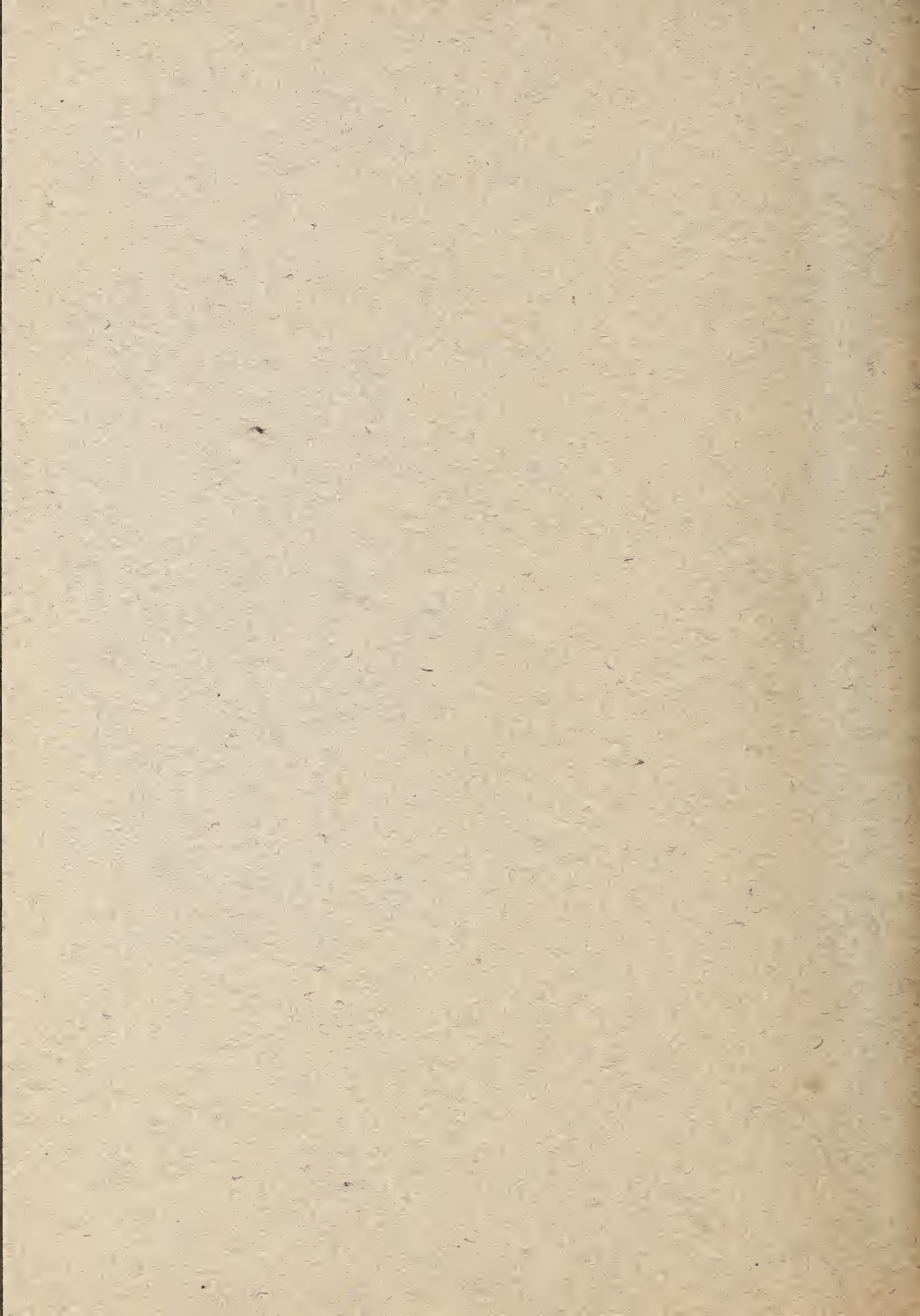
and

Parent-Teacher

Associations



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Issued by

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Superintendent of Public Instruction

"I look upon the thorough training of children as the one hope of civilization. The past is irrevocable; the present is difficult to rectify; but the future is largely within our control."

ILLINOIS CONGRESS OF MOTHERS AND PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS.

Enterprising teachers throughout the country have given the seal of their approval to Parent-Teacher organizations as tending to promote that understanding and co-operation between school and home which makes for the greatest efficiency of both. Your State Superintendent would gladly see each school in Illinois, whether in city or country, provided with such an organization and this pamphlet (prepared by the Illinois Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations) is issued by the State office in the hope of supplying needed information as to the easiest and wisest way of forming and maintaining Parent-Teacher Associations.

In the main there are three factors engaged in training our children—the home (to which, according to the highest American ideals, belongs the prerogative of religious instruction), the school and the street. The first two are presumably the intelligent forces engaged in the task, and they should have a common plane and standard of operation in order to minimize the unintelligent, if not evil, activity of the third.

Nothing in this world can be wholly good that is not socialized, and neither home nor school can be said to be socialized if they are separated by a wall of indifference and misunderstanding.

That such a wall does exist is admitted by all thoughtful parents as well as by teachers. It has been self-constructed as the result of the rapidly changing social, industrial and political phases of American life. It represents the unnatural relation between the two that had its beginning when teachers ceased "boarding 'round" and the school became better organized as an institution. A consciousness of the undesirability of this separation, not

to say of its positive harmfulness, is one of the impelling motives for the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations.

A Parent-Teacher Association affords the most natural and effective means of instituting a common standard for home and school in the training of children for their common end of citizenship. It means a saving of energy to the teacher, a broadening of understanding to the parent and a development of sympathy in both. These meetings will give parents an opportunity to learn many things about their children in their relations to the school and to other children, and will give teachers an opportunity to receive first-hand impressions of the child's relations to his home.

A Parent-Teacher Association is the best place to begin the elimination of misconceptions and to make new and right points of contact. Teachers will gradually, and often subtly, get the real reasons why their pupils are good or indifferent students, well or ill-behaved, and so be able to help where help is needed. Parents can be frankly told what the school is trying to do for the children and for the community, and why, and can then reasonably be held accountable if they do not respond to definite appeals for assistance and co-operation.

Neither father nor mother nor any teacher is excluded from the mutual advantages of such an organization. It is the common, non-sectarian, non-partisan, democratic meeting-place where teachers and parents may discuss their problems and learn many things from each other.

Parent-Teacher Associations have been aptly called "extension schools for parents and teachers." Through them sentiments of loyalty and respect will be instilled in the minds of children by their parents for that unique institution, the American Public School; school patrons will make the force of their united demand for added facilities and equipment and improvements heard by school officers, where the requests of the teaching force might be ignored; the necessity for uniform and correct social neighborhood customs can be brought to the attention of parents with an idea of establishing the right outlets for normal youthful activities in supervised playgrounds and dancing-halls, censored motion-pictures, well-directed musi-

cal and dramatic organizations and other desirable agencies. Individual parents will be brought to recognize the relation that correct diet, suitable clothing, proper hours for rest, study and recreation, periods of growth and physical condition bear to the school standing and deportment of their children.

There is no child's problem that is not its parent's problem, and no parent's problem that is not also a social and economic problem. The standards of an entire community will be raised as its parents become conscious that no family lives unto itself alone and that any condition in a community unfavorable to the best interests of any of its children is unfavorable to all of them; in no other form of collaboration do fathers and mothers have brought home to them how much each has in common with every other father and mother.

The problems of child welfare are the fundamental problems of State and are of universal interest because they exist in some form in every community, rural or urban. Shall we fathers and mothers and teachers not stand a better chance of making a success of our common business of solving these problems if we work together?

This much seems clear—every up-and-doing and forward-moving school principal will take steps to form a Parent-Teacher Association in his school and every enlightened and thoughtful parent will be an active member of one.

The objections to such Associations which at once present themselves to teachers are twofold. First, the time they will demand; second, the possible difficulty in so guiding them that their attitude will remain friendly and helpful. As to the first objection, while it is true that teachers will do well to give sufficient thought and care to an association in its beginning to establish it firmly along right lines, experience has demonstrated that it is wise to give the parents the heavier responsibilities, retaining for the teachers merely strong advisory powers.

Parent-Teacher Associations should be simple in organization and informal in conduct. The usual officers are a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. A fair division of these offices in an association connected with a graded school would select the Treasurer and one Vice-President from the teaching

staff, appointing school patrons to the remaining positions.

Associations in ungraded country schools should elect a teacher to one or more offices carrying advisory power and all Associations should place upon their program committees one or more teachers with not only advisory authority, but with a final power of veto. With these safeguards carefully established in the beginning, the second objection referred to disappears; any Association so founded will, in the very nature of things, work with and for the school and be of valuable assistance to the teachers without demanding too much of their time and strength in return.

Communities vary so widely that no hard and fast rules for forming organizations can be laid down. In some instances it is the school patrons who must be wooed and won to the Parent-Teacher Association idea, in others the wooing must be done by the patrons. It matters not at all which takes the initiative if a mutual interest and enthusiasm is finally attained.

A desirable first step is the preliminary gathering of a small group of people—teachers and parents—to plan for the organization meeting. These plans will be greatly facilitated by use of the printed matter of the Illinois Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations which may be secured (for postage) from the State President, Mrs H. L. Fleming, 1401 N. Main St., Bloomington.

At this group meeting a list of desirable officers and committee chairmen should be made and provision perfected for their nomination at the proper time. A suggested form of Constitution and By-Laws is appended which may be altered to meet the local need and presented for adoption at the meeting where organization takes place.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I.

This society shall be called.....

ARTICLE II.

Its object shall be better mutual understanding between parents and teachers and their co-operation in all work in the interest of the children.

ARTICLE III.

Any one interested in the purpose for which the club is organized shall be considered qualified for membership.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE I.

The officers of the association shall be a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, and Treasurer, elected annually.

ARTICLE II.*

Regular meetings of the association shall be held monthly (at the time decided upon by the officers after consultation with the teacher-members).

ARTICLE III.*

Dues shall be.....a year.

ARTICLE IV.

Elections shall be held at the meeting preceding the closing meeting of the year.

ARTICLE V.

A Program Committee shall be appointed by the officers. Other committees may be elected or appointed as needed.

ARTICLE VI.

The Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any regular meeting by unanimous consent or by a majority vote if two weeks' notice has been given.

ARTICLE VII.

The following shall be the Order of Business for meetings of the association:

Call to order.
Minutes of previous meeting.
Approval of minutes.
Program.

Committee reports (if any).
Unfinished business.
New business.
Adjournment

* Blanks should be filled out before constitution is presented to assembly.

The number of committees and their work should also be discussed at this time. In this connection the Year-Book of the State organization will furnish excellent suggestions. The purpose of the work at this preliminary meeting is not to usurp the rights of the larger body, but to make careful preparation for the organization, so that it may go quickly, easily, and in a manner satisfactory to all.

It is better to complete the framework of the organization at one meeting, a recess being taken for receiving names of members and their dues; dues may be received at a later meeting if desired but names and addresses of all in attendance should be secured at the first and a few following meetings.

Dues should be fixed with reference to membership in the State and National organizations which is covered for one year by ten cents for each member. Of this, one-half is forwarded by the State to the Treasurer of the National organization.

Membership in the State and National organizations is not compulsory but it is of the greatest advantage to the Associations. The workers in the State branch are without exception volunteer workers drawing no salaries, but contributing generously in money, time, and service. Through many years of experience they have accumulated practical knowledge of Parent-Teacher work which equips them for expert counsel and advice. Through the State organization may be obtained excellent papers on topics suitable for programs; also speakers who ask expenses only.

It is a clearing house for the exchange of ideas, making it possible for any association to get suggestions and help from all the others.

It brings the various isolated parts of the Parent-Teacher movement together and by enabling them to work in unison multiplies their power for usefulness.

The time to join is immediately after organizing, in order to get help, advice and guidance when it is most needed. The President's name and address are in this pamphlet. Send her the name of your association (including city or town), the name and address or its President and Secretary, and dues representing ten cents for each member up to the limit of fifty. You will receive in return the State Year Book, the Monthly Bulletin and other

printed matter, including the Parent-Teacher leaflet, a list of the loan papers above referred to, and a list of speakers who will come to you for expenses. Your association will be placed upon our membership and mailing list, and entitled to any help the organization can give. Dues cover membership for one year from date of payment.

Not only Parent-Teacher Associations but Women's Clubs, Church Circles, Neighborhood Clubs, Child Study Classes, Mother's Circles and many other groups of child-welfare workers are found on the list of Associations which have joined the State and National organizations: all such are cordially welcomed into our ranks as are also Associate Members.

Upon request the Treasurer will furnish forms of application for membership.

Among the leaflets printed by the State organization are the following:

Ten Good Reasons For Parent-Teacher Associations

1. Home and school are equal agencies in the education (character-building) of the child; there is, therefore, urgent need that they should work together in harmony and mutual understanding; neither can work effectively in ignorance of the other or at cross purposes with the other.

2. The Parent-Teacher Association enables the parents to become acquainted with the teacher and the school, and the resulting intelligent comprehension of the aims and methods of the teachers is shown in a loyal attitude of the children, which doubles the school's efficiency.

3. The Parent-Teacher Association enlarges the teacher's opportunities by making possible a knowledge of the child's home environment and influence and the viewpoint of the parents.

4. The reaction of the child to his school work is seen fully only in the home; the teacher who has no point of contact with that home loses the best opportunity of testing the value of his work.

5. A fixed and regular date of meeting is a saving of time for both parent and teacher. The latter can present a problem or explain a point as quickly to fifty parents as to one. The former can be sure of getting the desired information without intrusion.

6. Improvements for school buildings and grounds, added equipment and facilities for school work or school

play should be of quite as much moment to parents as to teachers; the intelligent demand of a Parent-Teacher organization is most effective in securing these things.

7. Many problems connected with the training of children are identical in home and school; the opportunity afforded by the Parent-Teacher meeting for full discussion of these problems, with all points of view presented, leads to wiser methods of dealing with children on the part of both parents and teachers.

8. Matters difficult of friendly adjustment when taken up as specific or personal instances may be dealt with as general problems in the Parent-Teacher meeting without offense to any and with benefit to all.

9. The world has no greater need than that of a wiser, better trained parenthood; this need is not yet recognized in school and college courses; the Parent-Teacher Association, therefore, serves as almost the only study class open to parents who wish to learn more of the duties of their calling. It raises the standard of home life through the education of parents.

10. Organization gives power for united and effective service.

D O N ' T S .

For Parent-Teacher Associations.

1. Don't forget that the purpose of your organization is to work solely and unceasingly to secure the best that is possible for the boys and girls.

2. Don't attempt to dictate the policy of administration of the school with which you are connected.

3. Don't bring private grievances to the meetings; they should be settled in the school office.

4. Don't allow your association to be used for the furthering of personal interests by individuals or political parties.

5. Don't allow money-raising to feature too largely in your work; there are more important ends to be attained.

6. Don't let your programs deteriorate into mere entertainments; keep them along lines directly helpful to both parents and teachers.

7. Don't exclude fathers from office if you wish fathers to attend; evening meetings are desirable in order to make their attendance possible.

8. Don't expect teachers to drill the children especially for their part of the program and don't keep the children waiting through tedious preliminaries.

9. Don't compel your speaker to listen to business reports and long preliminary programs; give him an early place on the program and a chance to get the early train home.

10. Don't let your meetings become too formal; have free discussion and good fellowship.

11. Don't be late in beginning or closing your meetings; have short sessions and conduct your business as expeditiously as possible.

12. Don't assign all the work to a small group of members only. Train up new workers by distribution of duties and responsibilities.

13. Don't fail to provide for the children who must accompany the parents because they can't be left alone at home; an extra room can be provided and one or two of the mothers can be appointed each month to care for the children there.

14. Don't for a moment believe that a successful Parent-Teacher Association can be conducted without serious thought and careful planning; give to your leaders your hearty support.

Some Practical Aids to the School Which Parent-Teacher Associations Have Secured.

Circulating libraries established in connection with schools.

Lunch rooms where, at minimum cost to the pupil, warm, wholesome food may be obtained.

"First-Aid" Cabinets complete with every facility for accident or emergency cases.

Use of schools as social centers.

Supplying pure milk to underfed children.

Securing needed additions to buildings or entire new buildings.

Improvement of sanitary conditions in school buildings and outbuildings.

Furnishing rest rooms for teachers.

Purchase of pictures to adorn school walls.

Planting trees, shrubs and vines in school grounds and distributing seeds to children for planting vegetable and flower gardens and vines about their own homes.

Purchase of pianos, piano-players, and victrolas to insure an abundance of the best music.

Planning and carrying out successful social gatherings for the pupils, designed to supplant fraternities and sororities.

Instituting campaigns of education in favor of simple school dress for girls, and of chaperonage for all social gatherings of young people.

Supplying equipment for household economics and manual training and securing teachers for classes in same.

Care for the health of children through medical and dental inspection.

The addition of playgrounds to the school property.

Study of the school curriculum.

Conference on the wisest way of dealing with questions of social hygiene.

Installation of sanitary drinking fountains.

In addition to these and many other helps, the work of the Parent-Teacher Associations results in a less easily measured but even more valuable service embodying:

Better mutual understanding between the two greatest educational agencies in the life of the child—home and school.

A higher standard of home life through the education of parents.

Enlargement of the teacher's opportunities by making possible a knowledge of the child's home environment and influence.

Intelligent co-operation to secure improved conditions throughout the community for the development and education of all children and young people.

Essentials in Maintaining a Successful Parent-Teacher Association.

Make it plain that the Association is formed for the purpose of constructive, helpful co-operation with the school in the interests of the children. Do not tolerate any attitude of antagonistic criticism.

Use care in selecting officers and committees.

Have regular days for meetings.

Keep to programs which fit the purpose of the organization.

Open and close meetings on time.

Distribute work and responsibility—do not center them in a small group.

Have general discussion following programs.

Have programs short.

Recognize the teachers by giving them such work as they are willing to do, but do not lean too hard upon them.

Make meetings informal, social and thoroughly democratic in nature. Do everything possible to promote acquaintance and good-will.

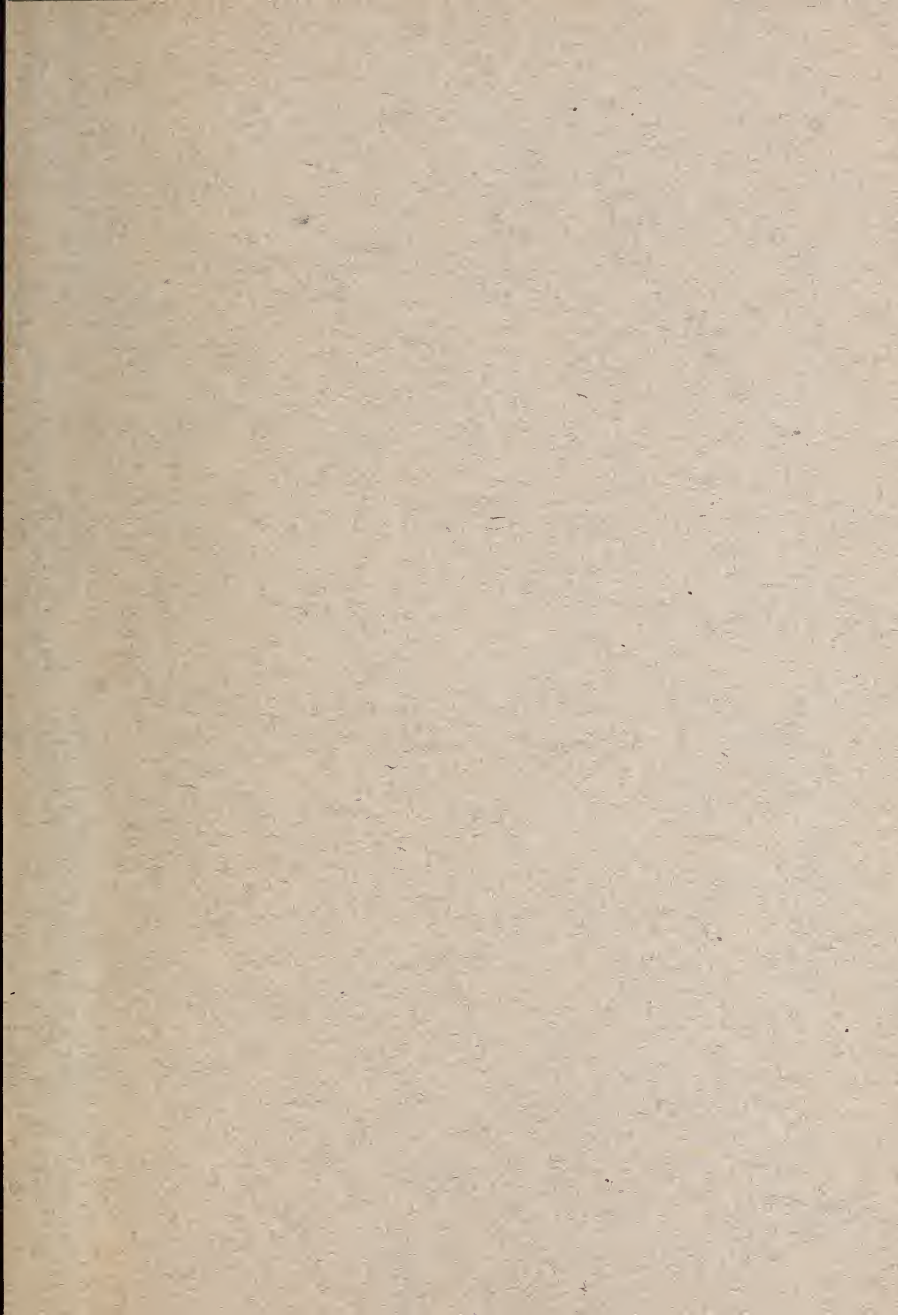
Make constant effort to increase membership and attendance.

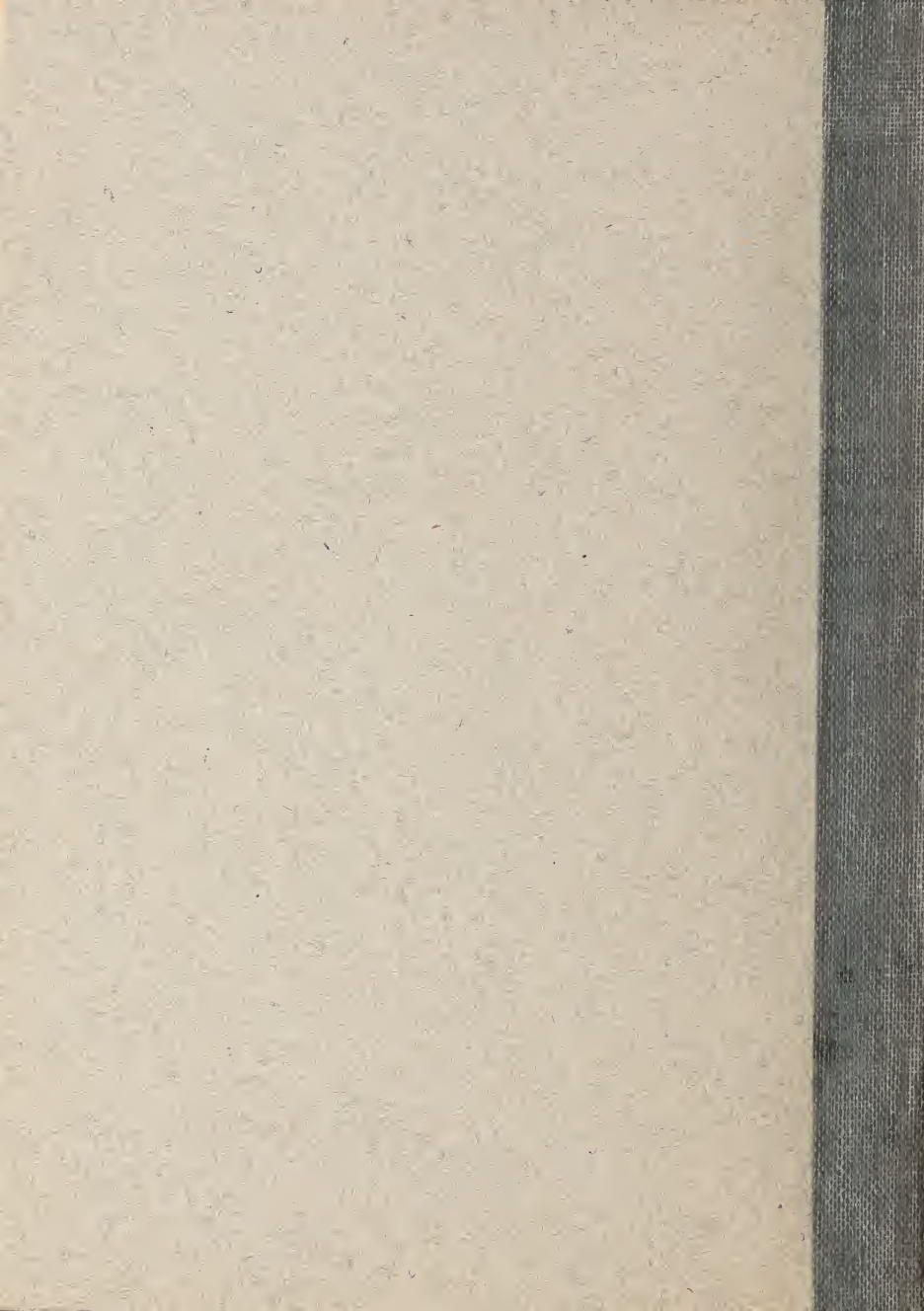
The world is more and more calling for unification of all forces for righteousness that successful battle may be waged upon the hosts of evil. A needed first step toward such unification is the mutual understanding and co-operation of School and Home.

The above four leaflets can be supplied in limited quantity without cost by the State organization to new Associations. They may be copied if desired, credit for authorship being properly ascribed.

The State organization holds before its Associations constantly an ideal of constructive and sympathetic co-operation with the school. Meddling is discountenanced and attention directed to higher standards of home life and parenthood. Because of this and the many other helps offered by the State organization, the influence of principals, teachers and superintendents should be used to bring their associations into membership. In this way permanence and a right spirit are insured and the teachers are relieved from any burdensome responsibility.







Gaylord Bros.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

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